

American Spiritual Ensemble

Friday-Saturday, February 3-4, 2012 • 8 p.m.



Asbury United Methodist Church • 1401 Camden Avenue, Salisbury

Back by popular demand, the ensemble strives to keep the tradition of American Negro spirituals alive. Its members have performed throughout the world, including such prestigious venues as the Metropolitan and New York City operas. The Ensemble, comprised of some of America's finest vocal talent, was broadcast as part of the PBS documentary *The Spirituals*.

These concerts are sponsored by The Peter and Judy Jackson Music Performance Fund; SU President Janet Dudley-Eshbach; Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Diane Allen; Dean Maarten Pereboom, Charles R. and Martha N. Fulton School of Liberal Arts; the SU Foundation, Inc.; Vaughn White, Multicultural Student Services; Linda Cockey and the Department of Music.

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

EVERETT MCCORVEY, FOUNDER AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

www.americanspiritualensemble.com

PROGRAM

I

- Walk Together, Children arr. W. Henry Smith
- Jacob's Ladder arr. Harry Robert Wilson
Brandie Sutton, Soprano Soloist
- Hail Mary! arr. William L. Dawson
Sarah Nordin, Mezzo-Soprano Soloist
- Hallelujaharr. Robert DeCormier
Robert King, Tenor Soloist
Frederick Jackson, Baritone Soloist
- Oh, What A Beautiful City! arr. Johnie Dean
Jeryl Cunningham- Fleming, Mari-Yan Pringle, Sopranos
- I Want Jesus to Walk With Me arr. Euridice V. Osterman
Ricky Little, Baritone
- Ride On, King Jesus arr. Hall Johnson
Karen Slack, Soprano
- Go Down, Moses arr. Harry T. Burleigh
Frederick Jackson, Bass-Baritone
- Come Down, Angels arr. Undine Smith Moore
Angelique Clay, Soprano
- I Wanna Be Ready arr. James Miller
Hope Koehler, Soprano Soloist
- Ezekiel Saw De Wheelarr. Moses Hogan
- I Know I've Been Changed arr. Damon H. Dandridge
John Wesley Wright, Tenor Soloist
- You Must Have That True Religionarr. Roland Carter
Karen Slack, Soprano Soloist

INTERMISSION

II

- Lift Every Voice and Sing arr. Roland Carter
- Listen To The Lambs R. Nathaniel Dett
Brandie Sutton, Soprano Soloist
- Steal Away arr. Joseph Jennings
Damien Geter, Baritone Soloist
John Wesley Wright, Tenor Soloist
- Keep Marchin' arr. Raymond Wise
American Spiritual Ensemble with University Chorale,
Salisbury Chorale and Members of the Community Choral Workshop
- From the Master Classes SU Vocal Performance Majors
- From *Lyric Suite* arr. Robert L. Morris
Humoresque/Juba adapted by Everett McCorvey and Tedrin Blair Lindsay
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Sequina DuBose, Cherry Duke, Hope Koehler
- Bring Him Home (from *Les Misérables*) Claude-Michel Schönberg
John Wesley Wright, Tenor
- Over the Rainbow (from *The Wizard of Oz*) Harold Arlen / arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano Soloist
- Circle of Life (from *The Lion King*) Elton John and Tim Rice
Sam McKelton, Sarah Nordin, John Wesley Wright

Program Subject to Change

The American Spiritual Ensemble is represented in the United States by
Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.
888-728-8989

info@Alkahestartists.net or www.Alkahestartists.net
The American Spiritual Ensemble is managed by Global Creative Connections
www.globalcreativeconnections.com

VISIT THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE WEB SITE
www.americanspiritualensemble.com

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE

The American Spiritual Ensemble was founded by Everett McCorvey in 1995. The mission of the American Spiritual Ensemble is to keep the American Negro Spiritual alive. Its members have sung in theaters and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and abroad in Italy, Germany, Britain, Scotland, Spain and Japan. The repertoire of the American Spiritual Ensemble ranges from opera to spirituals to Broadway. The members of the American Spiritual Ensemble are soloists in their own right and have thrilled audiences around the world with their dynamic renditions of classic spirituals, jazz and Broadway numbers highlighting the Black experience.

Everett McCorvey is a native of Montgomery, AL. He received his degrees from the University of Alabama, including a Doctorate of Musical Arts. As a tenor soloist, McCorvey has performed in major centers around the world, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Radio City Music Hall in New York, and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, China, Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics. During the summers, McCorvey is on the artist faculty of the American Institute of Musical Study (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, and the Intermezzo Opera Program in Palm Beach, FL. He holds an Endowed Chair in Opera Studies and is director of opera at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. McCorvey was the executive producer of the opening and closing ceremonies for the Alltech 2010 World Equestrian Games held in Lexington, KY, in September 2010. The Alltech 2010 World Equestrian Game was the largest equestrian event to ever be held in the United States to date.

Members of the American Spiritual Ensemble

Sopranos

Angelique Clay
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming
Sequina DuBose
Mari-Yan Pringle
Karen Slack
Brandie Sutton

Altos

Cherry Duke
Msiba Anne Grundy
Hope Koehler
Sarah Nordin
Angela Owens
Matthew Truss

Tenors

Mark Kano
Robert King
Sam McKelton
Chauncey Packer
John Wesley Wright

Basses

Patrick Blackwell
Damien Geter
Frederick Jackson
Ricky Little
Tay Seals
Nathaniel Thompson

Pianist

Tedrin Blair Lindsay

Everett McCorvey, Founder and Music Director
Ricky Little and Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Assistant Conductors
James E. Lee, Tour Manager
Peggy Stamps, Company Manager
Nathaniel Thompson, Tour Photographer
Hope Koehler and John Wesley Wright, Program Editors

SOLOIST BIOGRAPHIES

Patrick Blackwell, Bass-Baritone

Blackwell studied on a full scholarship at the Juilliard School of Music with the late Enrico DiGiuseppe. Upon graduating, he participated in some of America's foremost young artists programs, such as San Francisco Opera's Merola and Western Opera Theater, Houston Opera Studio, Opera Music Theater International with Jerome Hines, and The Aspen Opera Theater Center. Blackwell made his New York City Opera debut in 1995 singing the role of Colline in Puccini's *La Bohème*. Three years later, he debuted at The Lyric Opera of Chicago singing the roles of Burnah and African 1 in Anthony Davis' world premier of *Amistad*. He has since returned in such roles as Henry Davis in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, the Duke of Verona in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Hans Folz in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger Von Nurenburg* and Cal in Blitzstein's *Regina*. He also sang the roles of Porgy and the Undertaker in the 75th anniversary of the Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* tour with both DiCapo Opera Theater and New York Harlem Productions with Bill Barkhymer. Blackwell appeared at the Castleton Music Festival singing the role of Porgy with Maestro Lorin Maazel in summer 2011. When not singing, Blackwell enjoys spending time with his wife Joelle sons Chris and Jesse, and daughter Emily.

Angelique Clay, Soprano

Heralded for her "soaring lyric soprano voice," Clay has garnered performances in the United States, Europe and South America. A native of Louisville, KY, Clay received a Bachelor of Science from Oakwood College and a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance from the University of Kentucky. Operatic roles include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, the title role of Susannah from Floyd's American drama *Susannah*, the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and Lily and Bess in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Her oratorio repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*. Clay has recorded and toured as a soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble throughout the United States, Spain and Brazil. She has performed with international as well as regional orchestras, such as the Slovak State Philharmonic, in Kosice, Slovak Republic; Sinfonia Warsawia in Poland; Missouri Symphony Society; Knoxville Symphony Orchestra; Lexington Philharmonic; Louisville Orchestra; and Arcadiana Symphony Orchestra. She was a featured recitalist at the National Opera Association Legacy Awards Celebration in Washington, D.C., in 1999 and a guest soloist on *In Performance at the Governor's Mansion*, a public television performance sponsored by the Governor's Office in Kentucky highlighting artists of note from Kentucky. Clay is currently an assistant professor of music at the University of Kentucky.

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano

Cunningham-Fleming, a native New Yorker, has performed in Europe, Japan and the United States. While still an undergraduate student, she made her debut with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra in a concert version of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and has since then gone on to sing the roles of Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* at the Ernen Musikdorf Festival in Switzerland; Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the Mannes Opera in New York; Clara in *Porgy and Bess* in Germany, the Netherlands and Japan; The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*; the Flower Woman in Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*; the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; La Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*; and most recently, the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* with the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. An artist of great sensitivity, Cunningham-Fleming has appeared in recital and as a concert soloist in venues that include the United Nations and New York's Lincoln Center. She has also recorded Schubert's *Mass in G major* as soloist with the Boy's Choir of Harlem. In addition to the classical repertoire, Cunningham-Fleming is an outstanding interpreter of traditional music from the rich African-American heritage. She is a regular soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble and has toured with them throughout Europe and the United States. She is also an alumna of the Girls Choir of Harlem. Her innovative recital programming frequently includes works by African-American composers. Cunningham-Fleming holds a Master of Music from the Mannes College of Music in New York and a Bachelor of Arts from Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Kentucky under the supervision of Dr. Everett McCorvey. She is also an assistant conductor for the American Spiritual Ensemble.

Sequina DuBose, Soprano

DeBose's repertoire displays her versatility in a variety of comic and dramatic roles. Recently, she made her debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, covering the role of Annie in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. She also performed 40 consecutive performances as Clara in the 75th Anniversary National Tour of the *Porgy and Bess* with PAB Theater, where critics raved: "her lovely lyric soprano spun Summertime winningly ... she gave unusual stature to Clara as a figure of tragic grandeur" (*South Florida Classical Review*). In 2008-09, as Clorinda in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Opera Memphis, critics praised her portrayal of the wicked stepsister as one of "incessant vanity," with both sisters praised for characterization "conceived as zany grotesques ... as colorful as their voices" (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*). She has also performed with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, as a festival artist with Utah Festival Opera Company, and with the Martina Arroyo Foundation's "Prelude to Performance" Program in New York City. DuBose has received high rankings and awards in several competitions, including the Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition, The Lotte Lenya Foundation Kurt Weill Vocal Competition, the Annapolis Opera Vocal Competition, the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition, the 5 Towns Music and Arts Foundation Competition, the Richardson Awards for Voice, the NATS Competition, and the Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition for Emerging Artists. On the concert stage, she has performed and traveled throughout the Czech Republic, Bermuda, Martinique and Paris. Most notably, she has appeared as a soloist in the world premiere performance and recording of Wynton Marsalis's *All Rise* with the Morgan State University Choir, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. DuBose, a recent graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, currently resides in New York City where she studies voice with Joan Patenaude-Yarnell.

Cherry Duke, Mezzo-Soprano

Hailed by the press as a “radiant and confident” performer, American mezzo-soprano Duke “is a singer who communicates both the music and the text impeccably.” Her “striking voice-acting and stage movement” is especially evident in her performances of leading roles such as *Carmen*, Nerone in *The Coronation of Poppea*, Jo March in Adamo’s *Little Women* and Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Additionally, she has sung the title roles in *Hansel and Gretel* and *Der Rosenkavalier* as well as leading mezzo-soprano roles in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Falstaff*, *Rigoletto*, *The Mikado*, *La Traviata*, *L’enfant et les sortilèges* and *The Love for Three Oranges*, to name a few. In addition to her engagements with orchestras and opera companies around the United States, Duke has performed many roles with New York City Opera and traveled with them to Japan for *Little Women* and *Madama Butterfly*. In the 2010–2011 season, she continued on the roster of New York City Opera, covering the *Notary’s Wife* in *Intermezzo*. This season, she performed the title role in Cavalli’s *Giasone* with Opera Omnia at Le Poisson Rouge in New York. Duke is frequently involved in cross-over and brand-new works. As a soloist in several seasons of New York City Opera’s VOX concerts, she has sung a variety of styles, including roles in Scott Davenport Richards’ jazz opera *Charlie Crosses the Nation* and Gordon Beeferman’s post-modern *Ratland*. At Bard’s SummerScape Festival and Joe’s Pub, she was featured in Carl Hancock’s *Rux* and Diedre Murray’s “cabaret opera” *The Blackamoor Angel*. Duke also thrives in classic musical theater, having played Nellie Forbush in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific* with Ash Lawn Opera Festival. Recent new music performances include Lady Olive in the New York and European premieres of Dellaria’s *The Secret Agent* with Center for Contemporary Opera, as well as roles in NYCO’s VOX 2011 Contemporary American Opera Lab and the Yale Institute of Music Theatre. Next season, she will create the role of The Soldier in the world premiere of David T. Little’s *Dog Days*.

Damien Geter, Baritone

Geter is a native of Chesterfield County, VA. He made his operatic debut in 2004 as the Imperial Commissioner in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* with the Indianapolis Opera. Recent engagements include Elijah in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Bach’s *Wachet Auf*, Faure’s *Requiem* and *Ein Deutsches Requiem* by Brahms. In the past, he has been soloist with the Fort Collins Symphony, performing a concert version of *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* as the title character. He has also performed the role of Don Alfonso in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* as well as Graf Canero in Johann Strauss’ *Die Zigeunerbaron* in Salzburg, Austria. At the Aspen Music Opera Center, he covered the role of Dr. Gibbs in Ned Rorem’s *Our Town*. Currently, a resident of Indianapolis, Geter is the bass section leader at Tabernacle Presbyterian and Director of Performing Arts at University High School in Carmel, IN.

Frederick Jackson, Bass-Baritone

Jackson is a native of Atlanta, GA. He made his New York City Opera debut last spring in the role of Dessalines in *Troubled Island*. He also portrayed the role Nelson Mandela (*No Easy Walk to Freedom*) in excerpts performed on the 10th anniversary of their Vox showcase. Jackson spent the 2007-2008 season in the Zurich Opera’s International Opera Studio, after which he made his debut at the Hamburgische Staatsoper as Giove in a production of *La Calisto*. He has been engaged as a young artist with the Virginia Opera and completed his studies at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Other roles to his credit include Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Mandarin in *Turandot* and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Mark Kano, Tenor

Kano made his international debut singing Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* under the baton of Maestro Francesco Carotenuto in Rome, Italy. Kano has sung roles and as a soloist with Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, Nashville Opera, Lexington Singers, Middle Tennessee Choral Society, Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, Kentucky Symphony Orchestra and the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been a finalist in the Orpheus National Voice Competition and was twice a winner in the Mid-South NATS competition. Kano is a dedicated voice teacher and his students have been admitted as voice majors to various colleges and universities, have been finalists in the NATS competition, and participated in summer music festivals abroad. He holds a bachelor of music in vocal performance from Middle Tennessee State University and a master of music in vocal performance from the University of Kentucky. Kano has completed all of the necessary coursework toward the doctorate of musical arts in vocal performance at the University of Kentucky. He currently serves as coordinator for the Schmidt Youth Vocal Competition, is a part-time instructor of voice at Centre College in Danville, KY, and maintains a private voice studio in Lexington, KY.

Robert King, Tenor

King attended the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, CT. He was a young artist with North Carolina Opera, Houston Opera Ebony, Wildwood Opera Theatre, Connecticut Opera and AIMS. King sang the role of Julian Black (manager of Joe Louis) in the premiere of *Shadowboxer*, an opera about the rise and fall of legendary boxer Joe Louis. He has sung the roles of Mingo and Crabman in *Porgy and Bess*, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, Don Ottavio and Tamino in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and The Magic Flute, Nick/Trin in *La Fanciulla del West*, Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*.

Hope Koehler, Soprano

Koehler, whose voice has been heralded as having “the richness of Marilyn Horne at the bottom and the clarion clarity of Leontyne Price at the top,” has appeared in *Carmen*, *Il Trovatore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, *The Impresario*, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Gianni Schicchi* and many others. She has sung the title roles of *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Fidelio* and *Madama Butterfly*. She is a regular performer and featured soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble, a group that performs all over the world and whose mission is to keep the American Negro Spiritual alive and vibrant. She can be heard on the CDs *The Lily of the Valley* and *The Spirit of the Holidays*, *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and the DVD *The Spirituals*, recorded with the American Spiritual Ensemble. In June 2008, Albany Records released Koehler's recording of John Jacob Niles songs titled “The Lass from the Low Countree,” performed with James Douglass at the piano. Koehler serves on the voice faculty of the Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts as well as the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts. She also serves on the faculty of the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. Koehler received her Bachelor of Arts in voice performance and music education at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, and her Master of Music in voice performance at the University of Alabama. Her Doctor of Musical Arts was completed at the University of Kentucky in Lexington where she studied with tenor Everett McCorvey and soprano Gail Robinson. She is currently on the voice faculty at West Virginia University.

Tedrin Blair Lindsay, Pianist

Lindsay was raised in Rome, Italy, and has been a professional accompanist since the age of 10. He performs well over 100 recitals annually, boasting a huge repertoire of vocal and instrumental chamber works, with specialties in 20th century French and American music. Lindsay is presently on the opera faculty at the University of Kentucky (UK), where he works as vocal coach and musical director. His UK productions have included Joseph Baber's *River of Time*, Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land*, Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, and nine incarnations of UK's annual Broadway revue *It's a Grand Night for Singing*. He also teaches the popular course Introduction to Opera for the Lexington Opera Society, and for several years has hosted the Opera Quiz intermission feature for the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions at both the district and regional levels. While in Kentucky, Lindsay has collaborated several times with Actors' Guild of Lexington – as award-winning musical director for Sondheim's *Assassins* and William Finn's *Falsettos*, and as composer of an elaborate score for *Angels in America: Perestroika* by Tony Kushner. Lindsay has also worked with such New York companies as Bel Canto Opera, Golden Fleece Opera, Westchester Opera, Rockwell Productions and the off-Broadway Lamb's Theatre Company. In the early 1990s, he traveled as musical director of the first two national tours of Randy Courts and Mark St. Germain's *The Gifts of the Magi*, and another national tour of Roger Miller's *Big River*, and more recently he has performed in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and in the entourage of Muhammad Ali's European tour to promote his charitable foundation.

Ricky Little, Baritone

Little is a native of Winston-Salem, NC,. He attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in music. As a University Fellow at The Ohio State University, Little earned a Master of Arts in vocal pedagogy and the Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance. During this time, he also completed studies in opera performance at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Little has been engaged in hundreds of creative productions in North America, Europe, Asia and South America. He has given more than 100 international performances on four continents, which include 18 countries and over 25 major cities. To date, he has participated in 20 major professional tours, encompassing over 20 international music festivals. He has performed in some of the most prestigious music halls in the world, and before royalty and heads of state, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton. His work has been reviewed in national and international newspapers, and has been aired over the ABC, TBN, KET and BET television networks. Performances given by Little on the international stage have been broadcast over radio and television in Italy, Spain, East Germany, Great Britain, Brazil and other countries in South America. He can be seen in the films *Impresario* and *The Spirituals*, and can be heard on four CD recordings. The Alabama Music Hall of Fame has also recognized Little for his work as conductor with the Aeolians of Oakwood College. In 2003, the Aeolians were given a bronze star in the Hall of Fame. Currently, Little holds the position of associate professor of voice at Morehead State (KY) University and is assistant conductor of the American Spiritual Ensemble.

Sam McKelton, Tenor

McKelton, whose lyric tenor led the *New York Times* to exclaim him “a model Mozart tenor ...” and went on to say that “... there was a natural elegance to the sound,” has traveled throughout the world delighting audiences in both the classical and pop worlds. McKelton has appeared with many major symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles, including the Detroit Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Helsinki Orchestra (Finland), the Estonia Philharmonic (Estonia), the Knoxville Symphony, the Ravinia Festival Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony and many others. For three years, he traveled the world with superstar Harry Belafonte, with whom he was featured in the 1997 PBS special *Harry Belafonte and Friends*. He starred in an off-Broadway revival of the Broadway and London hit musical *Five Guys Named Mo’* and was an original Broadway cast member of the Tony Award-winning Disney musical *The Lion King*. McKelton has been seen in the role of Sportin’ Life in *Porgy and Bess* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Indianapolis Opera directed by Henry Miller and under the baton of Maestro James Carraher, and in the title role of *Udu* in the musical/light opera by composer and trombonist Craig Harris with librettist and poet the late Sekou Sundiata. He sang the role of The Stranger in the New York premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s opera *Markheim* with the Center for Contemporary Opera (CCO) and did a turn as Angel Levine in the critically acclaimed CCO production of *The Angel Levine* by Elie Siegmeister. As well, McKelton sang the world premiere of Donald McCullough’s *Let My People Go* with the Master Chorale of Washington at the Kennedy Center. He is one member of the singing sibling duo The McKeltons, whose CD project *Return 2 Love* can be found on iTunes and at CDBaby.com. A native of Detroit, MI, McKelton now resides in Charlotte, NC, with his wife Rachel Tucker (McKelton), a dancer and jazz instructor at the North Carolina Dance Theatre School of Dance.

Sarah Nordin, Soprano

Nordin is a fine singer who for her performance of Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* was praised in *Opera News* for her ability to “hold her own with the big guns.” Currently, Nordin can be seen in *Die Fledermaus* as Orlofsky with the St Petersburg Opera. Last summer, Nordin traveled to Japan on tour with the Metropolitan Opera to sing in *Don Carlo* and *La Bohème*. In 2009, she completed a two-year residency as a studio artist with the Orlando Opera Company, where she performed the roles of Mercédès in *Carmen*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* and Inez in *Il Trovatore*. Other recent role debuts include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Flora in *La Traviata* and Meg in *The Ballade of Baby Doe*. The latter was performed with the Central City Opera while she was contracted as a studio artist. Nordin earned her Bachelor of Music from Lee University where she studied with Tony Deaton and her Master of Music from the University of Tennessee where she was a member of the Knoxville Opera Studio. Nordin is also an accomplished French horn player.

Angela Owens, Soprano

Lyric soprano Owens is internationally recognized for her “beautifully musical” and “sensual” (*The London Times*) performances, as well as her “elegant” and “particularly captivating” stage presence (*Tallahassee Democrat*). For Owens, the 2010-2011 season ended with Vivaldi’s Gloria sung with the Siloam Singers in historic Brooklyn, NY, following a return to Atlanta Opera for its groundbreaking production of *Porgy and Bess*. Other performances this season included staged readings of two new works – the musical *Stages* by Tom Schneider and the acclaimed opera *King* by British composer Douglas Tappin, both premiering in Atlanta. Additionally, the soprano made returns to Berlin, Bremen and

Cologne, Germany, for performances of *Porgy and Bess* with New York Harlem Productions and appeared as a guest artist at Sisters Chapel of Spelman College. Previous operatic roles include Despina (*Così Fan Tutte*), Ninetta (*La Perichole*), Blanche (*The Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Najade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*), and the roles of both Clara and Annie in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in over 20 opera houses and concert halls throughout the United States, New Zealand, Egypt, Ireland, Wales and England. Other noteworthy engagements include previous debuts with Dallas Opera, West Australian Opera, Opéra Comique and a New Year's Eve gala concert conducted by Lorin Maazel and nationally televised on *Live from Lincoln Center*. Owens' experience also extends to the concert stage, where she counts among her repertoire Handel's *Messiah* and *Dettingen Te Deum*, Schubert's *Stabat Mater* and *Mass in G*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzer*, Faure's *Requiem*, and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*. Owens can be heard as The Narrator in Egil Hovland's *Saul*, conducted by Donald Neuen on SouthMark Custom Recordings (produced by Bill Bailey and Associates).

Chauncey Packer, Tenor

Packer is an exciting talent on the stages of opera houses in Europe and the United States. This year and in recent years, Packer has performed the roles of Steuermann in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with New Orleans Opera, Amon in *Akhmaten* with Atlanta Opera, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Pensacola Opera, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Mobile Opera. This young tenor is highly in demand for his captivating portrayal of Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess*. This past year, he made his San Francisco Opera debut in the role to rave reviews. He has performed the role with Opera Birmingham, Mobile Opera, Opera Grand Rapid, Pensacola Opera, Tulsa Opera and in many major European cities with the Munich-based New York Harlem Productions tour. He has performed *Porgy and Bess* in Japan and with Opéra Comique, where he sang Mingo and covered Sportin' Life in Paris, Caen, Granada and Luxembourg. He is also featured on the *Porgy and Bess* recording conducted by John Mauceri with Nashville Symphony, released in 2006 on Decca. In addition to the companies aforementioned, Packer has also performed with the Utah Festival Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Shreveport Opera, Nashville Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and LSU Opera in such roles as Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, the title role in *Werther*, Pong in *Turandot*, Sam in *Susannah*, Ruggero in *La Rondine*, Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus*, the Revival Singer in *Elmer Gantry*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*, Larry/Matt in *The Face on the Barroom Floor*, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Remendado in *Carmen* and Beppe in *I Pagliacci*. He has also performed concerts with Edmonton Opera, Opera Noire of New York, Baton Rouge Symphony, Mobile Symphony, Gulf Coast Opera, New River Valley Symphony, Grand Rapid Symphony and Pensacola Symphony in such works as Haydn's *Paukenmesse*, Bruckner's *Te Deum*, Schubert's *Mass in G Major*, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Mass in C Major* and *Ninth Symphony*. Packer has won several vocal competitions, including National Associations of Teacher's Singing Competition, Rose Palmai-Tenser Competition and Shreveport Singer of the Year, and he was a finalist in Ducrest International Competition. He placed several times in the regional finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and in 2005, he won at the regional level and was a national semi-finalist. Packer is originally from southern Alabama where he received his undergraduate degree from University of Mobile and his master's degree in music from University of New Orleans. Packer's future engagements include Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* with New Orleans Opera. He reprised his Sportin' Life performance with Atlanta Opera in 2011.

Mari-Yan Pringle, Soprano

Pringle is the 2011 winner of the Schuyler Foundation for Career Bridges, Inc. Grant. A member of the cast of the 75th anniversary national tour of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Pringle, initially cast as the Strawberry Woman, garnered glowing reviews and was deemed a stand out with a voice that created a sultry atmosphere. Her success ultimately led to delivering what has been called a refreshingly and beautifully rendered ... fierce Serena, and she has reprised the role in several houses abroad in Berlin, Bremen, Köln, Leipzig and Mannheim. Pringle is a regular soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble, former resident artist with the Opera Company of Brooklyn, Music Academy of the West under the direction of Marilyn Horne, and has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. A frequent recitalist and guest artist, Pringle held the privilege of paying homage to Mattiwillda Dobbs in song at the 125th anniversary gala of Spelman College (the alma mater of both Dobbs and Pringle) as well as participating in master classes with famed American sopranos Renée Fleming (The Hochstein School of Music – Young Audiences of Rochester) and Deborah Voigt (Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall – The Marilyn Horne Foundation). This April, she will be the soprano soloist in Antonín Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, and this summer, she will perform as a resident artist at the International Vocal Arts Institute. Pringle is the recipient of numerous awards and honors. She is a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Georgia District) and Encouragement Award (Southeastern Regional); a finalist in Florida Grand Opera and Pittsburgh Opera Center; a winner in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Rising Star Competition; a winner in the Friends of Eastman Opera Competition; placed second in the Washington International Competition; and was earned the Young Alumna/Rising Star Award from the New York Alumnae Chapter of the National Association of Spelman College.

Karen Slack, Soprano

Slack's voice sparkles with brilliance and warmth in the roles of Mimi, Cio-Cio San, Violetta, Suor Angelica, Liu, Luisa Miller, Arabella, Desdemona, Countess, Donna Anna, Tatyana and Serena. She is also perfectly suited as soloist for the concert works of Strauss, Brahms and Beethoven. She is the featured opera soloist in Lionsgate and Tyler Perry Studios' major motion picture and soundtrack *For Colored Girls*, released in November 2010. She sang Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra in October 2010 and a special Christmas concert with Cincinnati May Festival this season. In spring 2011, she sang Verdi's *Requiem* with the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra at the Mondavi Center (Davis, CA). *The New York Times* described her singing as "warmly expressive, especially in her brilliant top." *The Financial Times* labeled her "a radiant spinto soprano." And, *The San Francisco Chronicle* claimed she "was suitably grandiose of voice – she boots a large gleaming sound." Her May 2009 performance of Verdi's *Requiem* with Madison Symphony Orchestra garnered this review: "Slack had a lovely dark tone color, harnessing a captivating depth of emotion especially in the final 'Libera me.'" And her recent debut as Violetta with Sacramento Opera was praised by *Sacramento Bee*: "Karen Slack ... turned the opera into a showpiece for her powerful and expressive soprano with her performance of the Violetta role ..." Slack made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2006 in the title role of Luisa Miller and quickly followed that with performances at San Francisco Opera, Carnegie Hall, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia and Melbourne Symphony (Australia). She has gained international attention as winner of several high-profile competitions: 2007 Jose Iturbi Competition, 2006 Portland Opera Lieber Award, 2005 Florida Grand Opera Competition, 2004 Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, 2000 George London Award and, most recently, second prize in the 2008 Montserrat Caballé International Singing Competition. Recent engagements include the role of Cilla in the relatively new American opera Margaret Garner for Michigan Opera Theater, soprano

soloist for Verdi's *Requiem* with Madison Symphony Orchestra, Serena in *Porgy and Bess* for San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera, and Violetta in *La Traviata* for Sacramento Opera and West Bay Opera.

Peggy Stamps, Company Manager / Stage Director

Stamps is a native of Detroit, MI. She began studying dance and drama at an early age and had the opportunity to study and perform for many years under world-renowned choreographers and directors, including Sara Yarborough and Keith Lee (former soloists with The Alvin Ailey Dance Company), Robin Wilson (founding member of Urban Bush Women), Barbara Sullivan (Atlanta Dance Theatre), and Mike Lemmon (casting director, *The Sixth Sense*). Stamps has used her training to land roles in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *A Chorus Line* and as Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. She is also an award-winning product spokesperson (QVC Q-Star Award) and has appeared on cable networks in the United States and Canada on over 200 occasions, in addition to over 100 training films, commercials and voice-over spots. Stamps began focusing on choreography and stage direction early in her career. Over the past 25 years, she has choreographed and directed over 100 stage productions and concert works. In 2000, Stamps was awarded the Southeastern Theatre Conference's Excellence in Choreography Award. Stamps, however, always maintained her love for the performance of modern dance to the spiritual (the performance style danced by her first mentor). This propelled her to join the American Spiritual Ensemble in its second year. She has since this time served as a solo dancer, stage director and currently the company manager for the group. Stamps is a graduate of Purdue University School of Industrial Engineering. After working for *Fortune* 500 companies for 25 years as an engineer, "choreographing" technical projects, Stamps retired and became the owner and founder of The SquarePeg Group, Inc., an organization specializing in performing artist development. She is a BMI lyricist with original works contracted by Gaither Publishing and performed by Cherryholmes. Stamps is married to her favorite artist, architect Randall Vaughn. Read more about Stamps at www.ket.org/artstoolkit/drama/careers/stamps_p.htm

Brandie Sutton, Soprano

Sutton first embraced classical music during her undergraduate studies at Oakwood University, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in music with a concentration in voice. During her studies at Oakwood, she was a soloist for, and traveled with, the Oakwood University Aeolians. She then continued her studies and completed her Master of Music at The Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She has performed in most of the United States, Bermuda, St. Maarten, Poland – where she was able to perform in the annual Wratislavia Cantans International Music Festival in Wroclaw – and Italy, and she was part of Centro Studi Lirica in Novafeltria, performing in concerts around the area. In March 2010, she made her debut at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in a solo recital sponsored by the Vocal Arts Society of Washington, D.C., and a second appearance with the National Symphony Orchestra the following month. She is known mostly for her unforgettable performances of Handel's *Messiah*, for which she has received rave reviews. Other oratorio works include Dvorak's *Tě Deum* and Théodore Dubois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ*. Opera performances for Sutton include the roles of Lelia in Steven Allen's *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadows*, Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème*. Most recently, she was one of 12 finalists chosen from nearly 300 vocalists and instrumentalists from all over the world in the most prestigious Young Concert Artists, Inc. International Auditions competition. She credits her gift, opportunities and all accomplishments to the One who is mostly responsible for them – God.

Nathaniel E. Thompson, Bass-Baritone / Tour Photographer

Noted for his commanding stage presence and dark-hued voice, Bahamian-American bass-baritone Thompson was educated at Kentucky State University and Ohio State University, where he studied with celebrated tenor and artistic director of Harlem Opera Theater Gregory Hopkins. He also works with Metropolitan Opera star Andrew Smith and acclaimed baritone and voice teacher Mark Oswald. Thompson's overwhelming passion for the musical arts has captivated audiences across the United States, Mexico, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Spain with performances of opera, spirituals, gospel and other contemporary music. Thompson is an active member of the American Spiritual Ensemble, New Jersey State Opera, Harlem Opera Theater, Harlem Jubilee Singers and Opera Noire of New York. His operatic repertoire includes leading and supporting roles in Gershwin's American classic *Porgy and Bess*, as well as Verdi's *La Traviata*. A zealous recitalist, Thompson's most recent engagements include participation in a recording of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and solo work for the Umbria Jazz Festival in Orvieto, Italy. Thompson is also a freelance photographer, documenting and photographing models, actors and artists in the New York scene.

Matthew Truss, Countertenor

Truss has garnered critical acclaim both nationally and internationally on the concert and opera stage. Praised for his "mellifluous voice and ebullient manner," Truss is making his mark as a countertenor whose "precocious" voice "boasts both beauty and volume." To his credit are the operatic roles of Ahkhnaten (Glass), Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Britten), Belize in *Angels in America* (Eötvös) and the premiere roles of Rev. Eli Hunt in *We Are Sons* (Rojahn) and The Miller in *Rumpelstiltskin* (Epstein). A graduate of Boston Conservatory, Truss has been the recipient of many classical voice competition awards, including being a two-time finalist in the New England Regional Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and receiving the Jerry Hadley Award in the Elardo International Opera Competition in Bruges, Belgium.

John Wesley Wright, Tenor

Wright is known for his artistic and soulful interpretations of music from baroque to Broadway. Holding degrees from Maryville College and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, his diversity as an artist has afforded him tours as a soloist and in professional ensembles throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. As a concert singer, he has worked with such conductors as Nicolas McGegan at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan, and with Ton Koopman, as a member of the Amsterdam Baroque Choir. Many of Wright's concert career experiences have been collaborations with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra (DPO) under the baton of Neal Gittleman. With Gittleman and the DPO, he has sung the title roles of Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* and Einhorn's *Voices of Light*. In May 2011, Wright returned to Ohio and was critically acclaimed for his interpretation of the Celebrant role in Bernstein's *Mass: A Theater Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers* – the only fully staged production in the continental United States. This season, he makes his debut at the 131st Messiah Festival in Lindsborg, KS, in the title role of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and as tenor soloist for Handel's *Messiah*. Wright is the gold medalist and top prizewinner of the Savannah Music Festival's American Traditions Vocal Competition 2000 and has been a member of the internationally acclaimed American Spiritual Ensemble since 2006. He is a native of Rome, GA, and joined the Salisbury University music faculty also in 2006, where he is voice instructor, director of Opera Workshop and coordinator of vocal activities.

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Saturday, March 3

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